

MERCATOR:

O R,

Commerce Retrieved,

B E I N G

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From Thursday, March 18. to Saturday, March 20. 1713.

The scandalous Notion, that every One that speaks against the Dutch, speaks for the Pretender.

Every free Britain has a right to give his Opinion, if his Opinion be right.

The Dutch may be our very good Friends and Allies in Matters of Government and Politick Interest: But they are our known Rivals in Trade, and that more than the French.

The like is practised about Mr. Steele, and that no Man could be against Mr. Steele, but he must be for the Pretender.

The Absurdity and Injustice of this Usage exposed.

Three Questions asked of the People, who are guilty of these Things.

The Dutch are our most dangerous Rivals in Trade, and justly to be suspected in their greedily embracing the French Trade, while they strive to make us reject it.

IF it were to pass for a Truth, that every Man that makes the least Complaint against the Dutch, ought to be supposed for that reason to be in the Interest of the Pretender; it would be a very great Hardship upon some of the Wisest and most upright Men now alive, and who are as true Friends to Her Majesty in Her present possession of, and to the House of Hannover in their Claim of the Succession to the British Crown, as any that are alive in this Nation.

It seems an unaccountable Thing, that a Man whose Opinion of our clashing and interfering Interests with any of our Neighbours is just and impartial, cannot be allow'd with Freedom to give his Judgment, without such a severe Reproach, especially in Matters of Trade too, which have no Concern in, or Reference to the Affairs of State or Succession to the Throne.

To treat Men thus is taking away English Liberty in the most extensive Manner, for every Man has a right to give his Opinion, if that Opinion is right concerning our Privileges, or else he can have no right to preserve them.

If the *MERCATOR* says, that he never took the Dutch to be our best Friends in Trade, altho' he may grant them good Allies, must it follow, that he is arguing for the French, or that he is in the Interest of the Pretender! This is putting every Man's Credit to the Torture, and making him maintain his Principles at the Expence of his Reputation.

The *MERCATOR* makes this Introduction as a just protest against the Party-Rage of the Times, whose common Place it now is, when no Answer will lye against what is alledged to load the Person that speaks it with some Calumny, to take off the Force of his otherwise irresistible Argument.

What else has been the Meaning of the frequent Railing at Persons in answer to this Paper, and that at such Persons who have nothing to do with it, or any

Hand in it? The Language is plain, that they find it necessary to run down Men where they cannot run down their Reasoning.

To bring it back to the Case in Hand, whatever the Pretences of those Party-Men are, who, as a late Author affirms; tells us, That whoever speaks a Word against the Dutch, is speaking for the Pretender, yet the *MERCATOR* ventures to say first, and lay it down as a Maxim, That the Dutch are not the best Friends we have, as to Trade; Politicks and Matters of Alliance the *MERCATOR* neither meddles with, or intends at all in this Matter, let no Man join here what we thus fairly put assunder.

To this he adds, that so far as any Man opposes the Commerce with France in favour of the Dutch ONLY, without a clear disinterested View to his Country's Advantage; so far he is an Enemy to his Country's Prosperity, and acts only against one Rival in favour of another.

That the Dutch are very willing and very industrious to prevent our passing the Bill of Commerce with France, the *MERCATOR* believes no Man will question, indeed the Fact is so plain, it cannot be questioned without some Scandal, either upon the Senses or upon the Integrity of those who do it.

The *MERCATOR* then would ask this Question upon that Supposition; what can be the Reason which should make the Dutch so very solicitous against the Bill of Commerce passing in England? What Concern can they have in it; or rather what Concern can the Dutch have in it, which should not be a good reason for us to be for the Bill?

The *MERCATOR* believes it is a much juster way of arguing for any British Gentleman to say I am the forwarder for this Bill, because I see the Dutch, who I know to be our Rivals in Trade are so busy and so warm against it. The *MERCATOR* says he believes



believes this a much juster way of arguing than what is mention'd above, viz. That whoever speaks a word against the Dutch, speaks against the Succession, and speaks for the Pretender: This bringing all Disputes into a Party-Interest, and distinguishing Men for their Judgment in particular Things, as immediately joining with that General as so course a Delusion, and will quickly be so stale, and the Nation will be so surfeited with it, that all fair and impartial Men will and must be asham'd of it.

But it is the present Method by which Men think they make their Opinion popular, as in the late Case of Mr. Steele's being Expelled the House of Commons; the *MERCATOR* Condoles with that Gentleman the Misfortune he is under, not of being Expelled the House only, but of being justly fallen under the Censure of many Thousands of the most judicious, sober and sensible People of this Nation, who formerly admired him; among whom are a Multitude who are as remote from the Interest of the Pretender as he can be: And the *MERCATOR* cannot think Mr. Steele can be yet arriv'd to such a degree of Partiality in his own Case, after he has recommended so much Justice and Morality to the World, as to think that every Man that Opposes him in his Mistakes about Trade, and in his Maltreating the Queen and the Ministry, is for the Pretender.

Yet we are told in every Society of these Men now, that in Expelling Mr. Steele, the House has tacitly Expelled the Protestant Succession; That all that Voted against Mr. Steele Voted for the Pretender; and the like. Preposterous Prejudices! Whither will these things lead us?

But Truth is not to be terrified with Party-Rage; it must be Opposed to successful Clamour, or it will lie buried in the Dirt of the Street, and we shall all be overwhelmed with the Rubbish and Ruine of the Commonwealth.

The *MERCATOR*, and all who are concern'd in this Paper, are as Sincerely in the True Interest of the Protestant Succession, and as fully embark'd for the preservation of it in the House of Hanover against the Pretender, and against all Pretenders, as Mr. Steele, or as any of the Opposers of the Treaty are or can be.

But as this does by no means byass them in the Question of Trade, or in distinguishing between Dutch Rivals or French Rivals in Trade; so for any to pretend to concern the publick Disputes of Government in this Question, sharpen their Answers upon this Whetstone, and make Reflections pass for Argument, is meer Ribaldry, a Party-Cant, that has nothing but the Malice to recommend it; and the *MERCATOR*, whose Business is Trade, and who, as much as possible, avoids the mention of these things, dismisses both the Thing and the People, with asking them but Three calm Questions.

1. If, upon the Issue of these things, it should appear that the Protestant Succession is not in Danger, that the Pretender has no present Prospect, and his Friends here no reasonable Hopes from the publick Measures, but that the Protestant Succession is the real Concern and true Design both of Her Majesty and of all those who are entrusted with the executive Power under Her. If this should appear, How asham'd must these Men be at that time, who run up the contrary Opinion, even to a direct Charge upon Mens Persons, and by Names, whether Guilty or no? And what must we say of such Men.

2. If the Persons so directly Charged, as above, with being in the Interest of the Pretender, and Enemies to the Protestant Succession of the House of Hanover, should at the End of things prove to be Innocent of the Fact, and be real Friends to the latter, and Enemies to the former, Have they not a great deal of Wrong done them by these People? And how will they Answer it to God or Man?

3. How do these Men justify the Morality of these things, (viz.) Of affirming what they cannot make out, and charging Men personally with what they cannot prove? And upon what Principle do they act, but upon that wretched Principle of casting off all regard to Conscience and Honour, and abandoning themselves to their Passions and Party-prejudices?

God pardon them! the *MERCATOR* leaves them to their own Reflection; and asking his Readers pardon for this most necessary Digression, returns to the Affair of Commerce, which he confines this Paper to as much as possible.

The present Article is the Dutch being our Rivals in Trade; and the *MERCATOR* claims, that this may be said without the least Retrospect to the Concerns of both Nations in their Alliances and Political Concerns.

With these just precautions, the *MERCATOR* says, that the Dutch are our most dangerous Rivals in Trade; and that the Dutch appearing so earnestly against our opening a French Trade by the Treaty of Commerce, while at the same time they greedily embraced the French Trade themselves; gives good ground for any Englishman who understands these things, to suspect that the Trade to France is a rich Morfel, which they endeavour to keep us from, that they may enjoy it themselves.

If this be not just, for the *MERCATOR* would injure Nobody in it, it shall be acknowledged when it fairly appears so.

In the mean time, it is supposed no Man will Dispute this Point, Whether the Dutch are our Rivals in Trade or no? If they do, it shall be spoken farther to in our next.



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